



BOBBY JINDAL, Governor

Office of Juvenile Justice

MARY L. LIVERS, Ph.D., MSW, Deputy Secretary

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Open Letter to All OJJ Employees

Dear OJJ Colleagues:

It's always good to start the new year by reflecting on our accomplishments and looking at our plans for the year ahead. I hope you will think of your own professional and personal accomplishments as we look forward to 2011.

From the agency perspective, I would like to share with you some of the accomplishments of 2010, as well as where we want to go. This communiqué is to announce OJJ's major initiatives for 2011.

We **are** going in the right direction. What we are doing is working. We need to continue moving forward and you should know that the fiscal crisis is what it is: next fiscal year our budget will be reduced yet again. I submit to you that as long as we produce strategic cuts that lead to quality programming, quantity has nothing to do with our effectiveness as an agency.

The transformational changes we are enacting **are** producing quality results, and OJJ is doing better work with fewer resources (more with less). We are implementing best practices that have resulted in a decrease in recidivism, which in turn contributes to the decreased demand for residential services, allowing us to absorb a significant budget reduction while maintaining the current level of services to youth in our system. Systemic reform efforts include transformed treatment services in our secure care facilities, service coordination in communities, and use of the SAVRY, an evidence-based assessment tool.

We are becoming more efficient: we have accomplished these major reforms while at the same time seeing a decrease in our overall budget. Credit goes both to our initiatives and to you, our hardworking staff who are mission-driven.

Accomplishments

Recidivism Rate

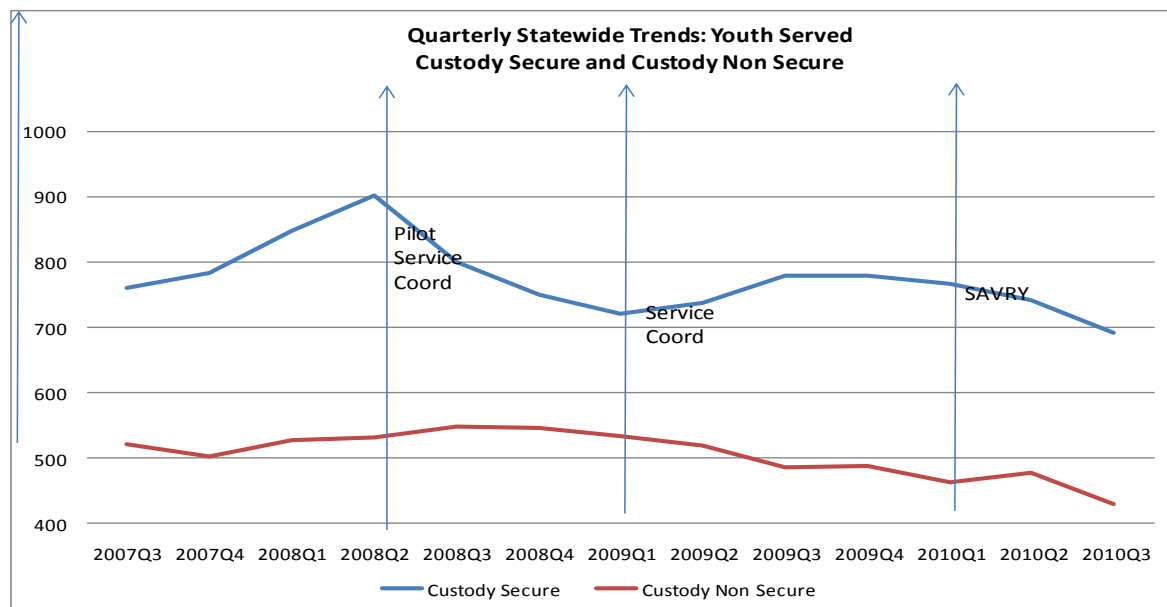
Our recidivism rate for youth one year after release from secure care is down 3 percentage points over the previous year. We must continue our efforts to utilize what we have learned to ensure that our youth become law abiding citizens.

SAVRY

We have implemented use of the SAVRY (Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth) assessment tool in all regional offices and introduced it in all three secure facilities. Research shows that the SAVRY is one of the best predictors of risk for re-offending. All youth adjudicated delinquent and placed in OJJ custody are assessed via the SAVRY, which allows for appropriate placement and planning for individualized services according to identified needs.

Service Coordination

Our population has decreased, both under supervision and in custody. The effectiveness of this model is contributing to better placement and matching services based on risk and need.



% change from		
	last qtr	2 yrs ago
CSD	-6.61%	-13.39%
CND	-10.06%	-21.86%

LaMOD

All residential service providers statewide have been trained in OJJ's therapeutic LaMOD program and have implemented the therapeutic model in the non-secure residential programs. We must continue to support those residential providers as we move forward.

Education Services

The number of youth obtaining GEDs at all three facility schools has increased. Opportunities have been provided for youth who have obtained GEDs to begin post-secondary education programs, such as attending one of the Louisiana Technical Colleges. Youth have also been able to participate in community service projects, such as Habitat for Humanity. Staff development was conducted for all education staff on the handbook for teachers: *Classroom Instruction that Works* by Robert Marzano, which identifies nine categories of instructional strategies proven to improve student achievement. Each teacher has received a handbook so they can now

incorporate these strategies into weekly lesson plans and instruction in the classroom. Two educational consultants from the LA Staff Development Council have provided extensive training geared to our student population and needs. Follow-up training has been conducted in the classroom at each site. All classroom teachers were trained to administer and evaluate TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) results, and are now certified to administer this educational assessment, given at intake to measure individual student strengths and weaknesses. The results are utilized to develop individual learning plans. Students are reassessed every six months to measure academic growth.

Health Services

A new partnership was entered into with Correct Care Solutions, a national correctional healthcare management company, to provide comprehensive quality medical and mental health care at Bridge City and Jetson Centers for Youth. LSUHSC-Shreveport continues to provide health services at Swanson. At Swanson, a change in LSUHSC's supervision of health services has resulted in improved communications with OJJ staff, and they now provide some additional related support services. Both contracted healthcare providers have partnered with us to deliver appropriate, cost-effective medical and mental health care to address the needs of our youth in secure care.

Second Chance Act

2010 was a building year for our Second Chance Act federal grant for evaluation and implementation of Pathways, a multi-faceted re-entry program, serving youth in the New Orleans and Acadiana regions. The state's Second Chance Act grant complements OJJ's efforts to transform our system from a custodial juvenile justice model to a therapeutic model of care. During 2010, we were able to hire grants coordinator Dr. Paul Graham and finalize contracts with subcontractors to link with our New Orleans and Lafayette secure care youth to implement the re-entry plans developed for them. Cadence of Acadiana, in the largely rural Acadiana region of southwestern Louisiana, works to ensure that youth get back into school, receive adequate drug counseling, and transition smoothly back into family life. The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) in New Orleans, provides many in-house services, including interventions, educational and social services. We also began working with the LSU School of Social Work to develop a data set for tracking the performance of the Pathways framework, to study the data and compare the difference between a six-month program and a one-year program. When this is completed, OJJ will have created a replicable, evidence-based re-entry program.

Going Forward: 2011 Initiatives

EPICS Training

Effective Practices in Community Services, a training program from the University of Cincinnati, will be taught to staff in the Community-Based Services office in Hammond, as a pilot program. Effective Practices for Community Supervision (EPICS) is a model developed by Dr. Edward Latessa and the University of Cincinnati School of Criminal Justice that teaches probation and parole officers how to apply the principles of effective intervention to community supervision practices. The framework assists with development and implementation of case management plans to target the criminogenic (crime producing) needs of higher risk youth.

Probation officers are taught a structured approach to their interactions with the youth, which includes monitoring, referrals, and face-to-face interactions to provide the appropriate treatment interventions. PPOs will learn to develop case management plans that target the criminogenic needs of youth and to apply a cognitive behavioral approach to their interactions. The EPICS model is not a replacement for programming, rather it assists by giving PPOs the tools they need to be “agents of change.”

Program Evaluation

OJJ will continue to work with the provider community to implement evidence-based programs to ensure effective programming for our youth. The evidence-based Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) is a tool developed to assess correctional intervention programs and ascertain how closely they meet known principles of effective intervention, which are proven to reduce recidivism. CQIS will be evaluating programs based on the CPC and providing suggested feedback for improvement. Ultimately, the data provided by CPC evaluations will be used to determine continued funding for providers. OJJ no longer automatically issues contract extensions. Beginning with the new RFP cycle, providers will be required to provide evidence-based or “promising practices” programming, as well as practices aligned with effective intervention. Through these efforts, OJJ is ensuring resources are spent on effective programs for our youth.

Coordinated System of Care (CSoC)

I know you have been hearing about this for some time – four state agencies are working together to develop a statewide coordinated system of care for Louisiana's at-risk children and youth with significant behavioral health challenges or co-occurring disorders. OJJ is working with the Department of Children & Family Services (formerly DSS), the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of Education. This year, 2011, will see at least one, possibly more, areas of the state begin to implement this proven, effective model. October 1, 2011 is the target date for having at least one initial site operational. We are looking forward to introducing CSoC as a means of keeping youth out of the juvenile justice system.

Service Coordination/Release Planning

PPOs will have a larger role in release planning, as this planning will begin as soon as a youth enters our system. This reflects a best practice that will render better outcomes for youth released from facilities.

Parental/Community Involvement

OJJ staff know that the kids in our care are only with us for a short time and that real, lasting change occurs when the family and the community are involved and supportive of the youth. To that end, Donna Bowie, our newly hired Family and Community Services Liaison, will focus on working with regional managers and facility directors to implement activities which engage the family.

Re-designing the CQIS System

We have been working on developing a new model of quality assurance that will reduce duplication. Facilities and the regional offices will be able to better assess outcomes. I look forward to an improved new system in 2011.

CPC – the Correctional Program Checklist

In 2011, we will complete our review of every treatment program that we offer, either through contract or within OJJ. This will provide a roadmap for improvement, and will produce better outcomes for our youth.

Enhanced Services to Youth in Education

We have begun to provide enhanced technology resources for our students. Computer labs will be set up at each school site with appropriate software to provide practice and enhancements of skills learned in the classroom. We are looking at specialized reading programs to measure student progress and to help our struggling readers develop skills to become fluent readers. We are looking at software to provide skills that will help our students increase their math and language skills, and to allow our students to practice the skills they need to pass the GED test. We are exploring options to provide courses online that will allow students to obtain credit recovery for a course or to earn a Carnegie Unit, through the LA Virtual School and/or a comparable program.

Transition Back to Communities

Transition of youth from our facilities to their communities remains a major focus. Our goal is to assess each youth to determine his individual needs, and then to provide the resources needed to help them become successful, productive citizens when they return to the community. Through our Title One grant, we will contract for one transition specialist position at each of our alternative school sites, to identify and establish re-entry goals and help each youth develop a portfolio of accomplishments that will enhance his ability to transition successfully into the community. Transition specialists will serve as mentors to help establish appropriate contacts in the community to ensure a smooth transition and provide follow-up services as needed.

SAVRY/Classification

By the end of 2011, we will see full integration of the SAVRY into procedures at the secure facilities. Also, OJJ's classification system will be re-evaluated and revamped.

Code of Conduct

In 2011, we will revise the Code of Conduct to be aligned with our treatment procedures in the secure facilities. The revision will be based on evidence-based practices, less focused on write-ups and more focused on changing behavior.

Therapeutic Model

A good foundation has been established; now is the time to raise the bar. Jetson and Bridge City have implemented LaMOD; staff will focus on maintenance and refinement. As the population decreases at Swanson, more elements of LaMOD will be implemented.

Columbia Center for Youth

The Columbia Center for Youth is set to open this year. In 2011, renovation of this 48-bed facility will be completed. I am very much looking forward to its opening, as the Swanson census will decrease and it will bring many changes – all good.

Acadiana Center for Youth

OJJ will continue to work with officials in the area to find a suitable location. We will continue seeking an appropriate site; staff is working together with officials from the area. Be assured that we have not lost sight of this important aspect of our overall reform effort.

Auditing

In 2011, we will move forward with a risk-based audit approach. The focus will be on internal controls and best business practices that will improve efficiencies.

Restorative Justice

In 2011, we look forward to further developing our restorative justice programs and community partnerships through our Restorative Justice Committee. We will focus on how our restorative justice programs can provide opportunities for youth accountability in the community, increase public safety and build on our youths' competency development.

Workforce Development Partnerships

In 2011, we will launch our pilot program with the Lafayette Regional Office and the two Workforce Investment Boards in the Acadiana Region. This partnership will give our youth direct access to career development opportunities in the Acadiana region.

Also in 2011, we will develop a referral system for the residential Job Corps facilities in Shreveport and Carville. Job Corps is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to provide disconnected youth the opportunity to earn nationally-recognized industry-based certification in high growth and high demand career fields.

Summary

While this is not a comprehensive list of all that OJJ accomplished last year, or all that we will work on this year, these major initiatives will give you an idea of direction that we are taking in 2011. We all recognize that OJJ is a dynamic agency and that we continue to push for the best – the most efficient and best practices, the highest quality programming, well-trained and motivated staff – all resulting in best outcomes for the youth and families we serve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary L. Livers

Dr. Mary L. Livers, Ph.D, MSW